The Story of a Tragedy

A Review by W. B. M'CORMICK.

WOODROW WILSON AND THE WORLD SETTLEMENT. By Ray Stannard Baker. Three volumes. Doubleday, Page & Co.

"WHAT I seem to see—with all my heart I hope that I am wrong" —said President Wilson to George Creel on board the George Washington en route to the Peace Conference, "is a tragedy of disappointment." Ray Stannard Baker's three volume narrative is the story of that tragedy.

For a variety of reasons (including the passions raised by the world war, the overwhelming desire of the peoples of the world for peace and a return to normal living, the novelty of the President of the United States going to a foreign country as the head of a treaty making commission and the enormous amount of space devoted to the doings of the Peace Conference by the American newspapers) the people of the United States followed the reports of the work of the conference with an intensity of interest given to the few things happening in the world. So that in its major outlines and in many of its details Mr. Baker's narrative is a thoroughly familiar story. But the work has great value in that it tells this tremendous tale consecutively and assembles the facts of the Peace Conference within the pages of two volumes, the third one being devoted to documents and reports relating to the conference and the work of the various councils and committees that are not readily available for students of history.

As is now well known Mr. Baker drew much of his material for this work from the papers kept by President Wilson in a steel document box in Paris. But in addition to Mr. Wilson's personal memoranda he had Sir Maurice Hankey's minutes of the Council of Four—"probably not far short of three-quarters of a million words"—the minutes of the Council of Ten, reports and memoranda of the members of the American delegation made for the President, and correspondence received by the President from all over the world—a collection of documents of a quality and number to make the mouth of the professional writer of history water.

It is Mr. Baker's gift to present his material in a lucid and interesting manner, markedly devoted to the Wilsonian view of the whole situation and its results, touched here and again with pregnant comments on the events and lightened with personal sketches of some of the leading figures—occasionally harsh but more often distinctly humorous. Mr. Baker evidently had a rod in pickle for former Secretary of State Lansing and he takes it out on occasion and applies it with a touch calculated to make its victim wince. He has an intense admiration for Gen. Bliss—"I shall like his memoirs best of all, I think, when he comes to publish them," he writes—and is no admirer of either Lloyd George of Georges Clemenceau.

The Senators of Washington who are reported to object to Clemenceau's present visit to the United States and to his speeches, will probably find a profound satisfaction in Mr. Baker's picture of Clemenceau as the arch enemy of the United States, as represented by Mr. Wilson and his League of Nations and therefore of the world's peace. One of the most amusing passages in the story is that of Lloyd George upsetting the routine of the French Foreign Office by insisting on having his tea "and getting it" and of his coming out of a conference room in the Quai d'Orsay and exclaiming: "I don't believe the air in that room has been changed since the days of Louis Philippe."

To Mr. Baker the problem, the great difficulty of the Peace Conference, was that it meant a struggle between the old order and the new, the secret diplomacy of Europe of the Congress of Vienna type with the Peace Conference where the American and other correspondents practically forced themselves into the proceedings, and where the President occasionally practiced "pitiless publicity" to the distress of the French and Italians in particular. The minutes, at one point in the discussion of the League of Nations, note: "Mr. Lloyd George remarked that with all due deference to President Wilson, he could not help saying that the statement [of the President's who insisted that the league must be rushed] to which they had just listened filled him with despair." Of course, Lloyd George didn't despair long. The expression was purely rhetorical, but extremely characteristic, as characteristic as his passion for tea and fresh air.

Another trouble maker, according to Mr. Baker, was Marshal Foch. The grave, simple soldier we think him disappears before Mr. Baker's picture of him as the leader of the French militarists who "wanted to use vast armies—including the 2,000,000 fresh young soldiers from America—to march across Germany and subdue Russia. He had Napoleonic dreams of colossal new wars in which the conquest of Russia was an element." In the frankness with which he makes these comments, Mr. Baker is the peer of Boswell and Margot Asquith. Of what happened in that month, during which the President returned to the United States, Mr. Baker says of Lansing: "Yet the moment the President turned his back he agreed fully with Balfour and Clemenceau and Foch in a scheme which would wreck the President's whole plan. He never apparently thought of supporting the President's resolution; he probably never even sensed the larger diplomatic consequences of the move, or understood what was being 'put over.'"

It is in this presentation of the maneuverings that went on while the President was not guarding his great project of the League of Nations in person that Mr. Baker presents his *apologia* for Mr. Wilson. Showing that while the President had told the Council of Ten that he was leaving Col. House to take his place "he had not fully explained to or instructed House." Mr. Baker writes:

"Here again entered one of the President's peculiar limitations—his inability to explain himself, his assumption that the minds of his associates, having accepted his leadership, would necessarily follow along his own clear, vivid, swift leaping logical processes. He always assumed that moral or emotional support meant clear intellectual understanding—which does not at all follow. This assumption as applied to the people at large, as well as to close associates, lay at the root of many of the President's most serious difficulties. Having said a thing once, he seemed to think it was all clearly understood and accepted—was it not reasonable?—while, as many a humbler politician could have told him, it had to be repeated a thousand times, published in every newspaper, put in the movies, set to music!"

Aesculapius on the Witness Stand

A Group Review by JOSEPH GOULD.

THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN ITS SALIENT FEATURES. By Walter Libby. Houghton Mifflin Company.

OUR MEDICINE MEN. By Paul de Kruif. The Century Company.

GREEK BIOLOGY AND GREEK MEDICINES. By Charles Singer. The Oxford University Press.

IN this age of self-analysis the professions are making as great an effort as individuals are to find where they stand. Medicine is searching its own corporate soul as keenly as law or the ministry. It is asking what is the real function of the physician. The debate resolves itself into a question as to whether medicine is an art or a science.

Walter Libby has had success in popularizing scientific dogma. He has here written "The History of Medicine in Its Salient Features." This book is based on a course of lectures which he has given at various universities in America. He sees medicine from a dual standpoint. He chronicles successful healers and those who devoted themselves to research. In some respects his book is unsound. In his chapter on Babylonian medicine he employs a poor translation of the code of Khammurabi. He touches on many points that are far afield. It is legitimate to give a long chapter on Darwin, whose hypothesis has revised all scientific work. However, to be thoroughly up to date he should have told about the Mendellun law. Incredible as it seems, he has entirely neglected to mention the work of the eugenics records office on heredity in relation to disease. Otherwise he is well abreast of the times in his chapters on Anaesthetics, Antiseptic Surgery, Presentive Medicine and Medical Science and Warfare.

Mr. Libby's book sheds some light on the doctor's dilemma. He seems to approve of Thomas Sydenham's attitude, which he thus summarizes: "The special province of the physician, however, is not, in the judgment of Sydenham, scientific research. It is rather comparable with that of a pilot whose only business it is to see that the ship be not sunk, not to speculate on the ebb and flow of the tide." However Sydenham did not entirely repudiate the claims of research. He said: "If in each age of the world a single person only had properly treated upon one single disease the province of the physician, or the art of healing, would long ago have reached its height and would have been as complete and perfect as the lot of humanity permits." In the fourteenth century Guy de Chauliac presented the case for continued effort. He lived in a period which idolized the lore of Galen, but he said: "We are like children astride the neck of a giant, who sees all the giant sees and something besides."

When the Venizelos boom was at its height a group of English scholars collaborated on a volume called "The Legacy of Greece," and Charles Singer has revised and reprinted his chapter on "Greek Biology and Greek Medicine." This book is unusually well illustrated and employs the standard translations. It is a very adequate treatment of its topic. The author says: "It is the distinction of the Greeks alone among the nations of antiquity that they practiced a system of medicine based, not on theory but on observation accumulated scientifically as time went on." In the beginning the field of medicine was rather vague and ill defined. Of this period Mr. Singer says: "Philosophy and science are inextricably linked and there is no clear demarcation between them." No clearer statement of the relation of healing and research was ever made than that of Hippocrates. He said: "Where the love of man is there is also love of the art."

Paul de Kruif is a devoted student of bacteriology, the most modern of sciences, but he is essentially conservative. In his present book, "Our Medicine Men," he utters a scathing indictment of things as they are in the medical profession. His criticism is given in a friendly spirit and should be taken cum grano salis, because he seems to enjoy overstatement. He feels that the times are out of joint. He says: "The stop and go, the safety first, the watch your step, the keep off signs of to-day are raised against every desire and instinct that has given color to life and that has mitigated a little the essentially tragic lot of mankind. He accuses prohibitionists of juggling with facts. He claims that medical schools are engaged in the "standardized production of intellectual Fords." Small city health officers are "frequently politicians, orators, poltroons and windjammers whose salaries might better be devoted to municipal displays of fireworks." His temperament leads him to hit out in all directions. His essential thesis is sound. He quotes with approval De Nan Orede's statement that commercialism and science are ruining medicine. He would like to replace the overpaid specialist with the almost extinct "family physician whose praise has been so well sung by Oliver Wendell Holmes." He says: "When the practitioner of medicine ceases to be the optimistic and sympathetic friend of his patient and becomes the cold man of science he loses a large part of his value. The last and most important function of the physician is still his art, which consists largely in the emotional relationship he must bear toward his patient. In this all good doctors from Hippocrates to Osler have been proficient. This is in its nature antipathetic to the scientific attitude."